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NOTES

I. MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

THE PARK SYSTEM OF AMERICAN CITIES

Baltimore.—*Park System.*¹ The park system of Baltimore consists, roughly speaking, of four larger parks, set almost geometrically upon the four corners of the city, and of some dozen smaller parks and squares scattered irregularly throughout the residential sections. As has been long remarked, the value of these open places depends not so much upon their size as upon their accessibility, and judged by this test Baltimore is not altogether fortunate. Druid Hill Park, in the northwest, and Clifton in the northeast, monopolize between them nearly a thousand acres, about two-thirds of the total park area; and while they serve most admirably the northern portion of the city, it is in the southern, the more crowded portion, that the need for park space is most pressing. The larger part of this section is inhabited by laboring people, chiefly factory workers, and although there is but little approach to a slum condition, the section is æsthetically barren and lacking in proper sanitary advantages. Patterson Park, of 106 acres, and several minor parks of much less size are inadequate and unequal to the demands made upon them.

It is only of recent years that any effort has been made towards systematic park development. Druid Hill and Patterson Parks were early acquired, but then there was a lull of some thirty years before any marked additions were made. The purchase of Carroll Park, in 1890, and of Clifton, in 1895, filled out fairly well the largest gaps in the system. In 1902, several citizens of Baltimore, in making a gift of land in the northern suburbs for a future site of the Johns Hopkins University, donated the fifty western acres of this tract to the city. The idea was that this should be made a link in an extensive chain of boulevards and parkways; and the gift accelerated a movement then latent to improve and enlarge the entire park system. As a consequence, Mr. Frederick Law Olmstead was engaged by the Municipal Art Society to make a study of the park needs of Baltimore and the best means of meeting them. The plan submitted was approved in substance by the city administration, and an Enabling Act for a suitable loan was before the Legislature when the February fire put a stop to the undertaking. It is believed, however, that the delay will be but temporary, and there is little doubt that ultimate development will be along the lines laid down by Mr. Olmstead.

The basic ideas of his report are the utilization of the valleys of two natural water-sources which skirt the eastern and western sides of the city, and the connecting of these with the older parks by a chain of broad boulevards. This

¹ Communication of Mr. H. S. Hanna, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.

would give a continuous line of park-ways around the city, bordering close upon the residential sections and developing increased utility with the expansion of the city. The report further contemplates the establishment of many smaller parks, principally in the outlying districts, and the enlargement of Patterson Park to double its present area. Unfortunately, the close-built character of the city offers little opportunity, without prohibitive expense, of any radical extension of centrally located parks.

The idea of a park as a well-groomed, well-policed lawn for unobtrusive communion with nature was long dominant in the minds of park managements. But it is now beginning to be realized that to a vast number of city dwellers the park appeals less as a garden than as a play ground, less for its placarded grass-plots than for its possibilities of amusement. To the landscape artist this craving may be a low one, but it is natural and wholesale; and in a city like Baltimore where the taxpayers are unwilling or unable to provide special recreation grounds in the more congested sections it seems most feasible to use portions of the existing parks for this purpose. Considerable headway has lately been made in this direction, and open-air gymnasiums, athletic fields, children's playgrounds, outdoor concerts, etc., are being provided with commendable liberality.

The management of the parks is in the hands of a Board of five Commissioners appointed by the Mayor for a term of four years. The entire expense of care and maintenance is met out of a special fund derived from a 9 per cent. tax on the gross receipts of the street railways.

Buffalo.—*Park System.*² The parks of Buffalo have always been managed by a Commission appointed by the Mayor of the city. For a long time this Commission consisted of fifteen members, but this proved to be an unwieldy body, and in February, 1902, the number was reduced to five by act of the Legislature.

During the last twenty-five years, Buffalo has spent over five and a half millions of dollars upon its park system, of which a little over a million represents the cost of the land taken, the rest being expended upon construction and maintenance. There are six large parks, varying in size from 22 to 362 acres, the total area being 749 acres. There are also 23 open squares covering in all 74 acres. To these should be added the area of the park approaches, which amounts in all to 224 acres, making the total park area in the city, 1,049 acres.

The parks, big and little, are distributed all over the city, and many of them are connected by beautiful roads and boulevards. The largest and most beautiful single one is Delaware Park, which has a great variety of surface, comprising broad open meadows, wooded slopes, a beautiful lake, and many thickets of shrubbery. A part of it is occupied by the accommodations furnished for a small, but interesting zoological collection, and two very fine buildings have been added within the last three years—that of the Buffalo Historical Society, which was erected by the State of New York as its official building during the Pan-American Exhibition of 1901, and the Albright Art Gallery, which is the

² Communication of Professor A. C. Richardson, Buffalo, N. Y.

gift of a public-spirited citizen. This is by far the finest edifice in the city. Besides the parks, there are also five or six municipal playgrounds, some of which were established upon land already owned by the city, and others upon leased ground. One of these latter plots will be purchased this year, but aside from this no extension of the park system is contemplated at present.

Cincinnati.—Park System.³ In Cincinnati, the administration of the parks is local; the Board of Public Service, composed of five men, elected at large by the city, are charged, among other things, with the care of the parks. This Board elects an official known as Superintendent of Parks. There has been little growth within the past twenty-five years in the system.

The parks are accessible to all citizens of the city proper; the two largest parks, Burnet Woods and Eden Park, being on street car lines running from the centre of the city. The smaller parks are located in the central and western parts of the city. When the new parks in contemplation shall have been completed, every part of the city will have sufficient park space. The present park area of Cincinnati is about 395 acres. During the past few years there has been considerable agitation for increased park area, and within the last year this has been successful; \$1,000,000 has already been appropriated for this purpose, and property within the city proper will be condemned, so that new parks will be located in the east and west ends of the city, and in the central part. Next year, in all probability, there will be a park connecting Avondale and Walnut Hills, two of the leading suburbs. At present the authorities deem it best to locate small parks throughout that residence portion of the city occupied by workingmen.

Cleveland.—Park System.⁴ The care and maintenance of the park system belong to the Board of Public Service, the chief administrative body of the city. The Board of Public Safety has supervision of the policing of the parks, and for this purpose employs a small number of special policemen. Such control of the parks has obtained since May of 1903, when the new municipal code went into effect. Just prior to that time the system had been under the jurisdiction of the Director of Public Works, and preceding his control the parks were, by a special statute, placed in charge of a commission appointed by the Mayor. The system is very largely the product of the past twenty or twenty-five years. Twenty years ago the city owned but few parks and they were little more than public squares. These parks were not fully adapted to park purposes. The city now owns 1412 acres of park lands, driveways and boulevards, containing 28 miles of roads and 33 miles of walks.

With the exception of the small squares in the congested part of the city, the greater area of the parks is found in the city's outskirts, and they may be said to comprise the border land between the city and its immediate suburbs. While, however, the parks are located near the outskirts of the city, there is no section of the city from which one or more parks are not conveniently accessible.

The public is greatly interested in the extension of its park system, and while

³ Communication of Max B. May, Esq., Cincinnati, Ohio.

⁴ Communication of F. E. Stevens, Esq., Cleveland, Ohio.

no enactment provides for it, there is a sort of unwritten law or definite purpose carried forward from time to time to create a system of parks and boulevards which shall completely surround the city. Extensive parks are now located on the lake front, the western, the southwestern, the southern, the southeastern, the eastern and the northeastern radia of the city. This system so nearly comprises a circle that the completion of the circle presents no insuperable difficulties.

A marked change of policy has taken place in the control of the parks. "Keep off the grass" signs have everywhere been removed; free band concerts are provided in summer; in certain parks religious services are held, in which representative ministers take part. The public is encouraged to make these parks their playground; harmless sports of various kinds are permitted. The result is that the parks are now used as never before, and the great freedom permitted is not abused. They are carefully maintained and their natural beauty and healthful utility constantly enhanced by employing the services of experts on the various phases of park development.

Grand Rapids.—*Park System.*⁵ Grand Rapids has a little over 140 acres of park lands. This is much less than the park areas of some smaller cities. The park system is under the immediate control of a superintendent of parks appointed annually by the Common Council. The Council Committee on parks has the duties of a Park Commission, with the exception that all of its acts are subject to strict control by the Council as a whole.

The principal park lies at the western extremity of the city and covers about 107 acres. Twenty years ago the original 40 acres of this park was left to the city by Mr. John Ball, for whom the park has been named. The pieces of land added to the original lot have been purchased from time to time. Most of this park is beautiful hill land covered with the original forest. Only a narrow strip along the front is open to improvement. The park committee has long felt the need of procuring for park purposes some of the open level lands lying between the park and the built-up portions of the city. The question of buying a tract of thirty acres of this land was to have been submitted to the people this spring, but was withdrawn by the Council on account of the disastrous flood that covered a large portion of the city on the west side of the river during the last week of March. The city has a number of small parks in various sections, but not as many as are needed. However, Grand Rapids is a city of beautiful trees and well-kept lawns, and the need of parks is lessened by this fact. There is considerable difference of opinion among the citizens as to whether further expenditures should be devoted to the extension and improvement of John Ball Park or to the acquisition of more small parks or the extension of school grounds. An influential body of citizens is now working for the development of a boulevard system. The city is quite in need of a Park Commission to devise and perfect a general plan of park extension for the future.

Milwaukee.—*Park System.*⁶ The administration of the park system of Milwaukee is purely local. Section 10 of chapter 488 of the Wisconsin Laws of

⁵ Communication of Delos F. Wilcox, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

⁶ Communication of John A. Butler, Esq., Milwaukee, Wis.

1889 authorized the Mayor of Milwaukee to appoint, on or before the first day of June of that year, five Park Commissioners; one for a term of one year, one for two, one for three, one for four, and one for five years; one Commissioner to be appointed annually thereafter for a term of five years. In case of a vacancy, the Mayor was authorized to appoint a Commissioner for the unexpired term.

Under the provisions of this law all lands acquired by the city for park purposes since its passage are managed and controlled by said Board, subject to rules and regulations which it is authorized to adopt. Section 2 of Chapter 179 of the laws of 1891 gives the Board exclusive power to manage, control, and improve the parks, and also the boulevards of the city, and to employ such skilled labor as may be necessary. Section 6 of the same chapter provides that the Common Council shall include in the annual tax levy a special tax, not exceeding one-half of a mill, which shall be paid into the city treasury as a distinct fund, known as the "Park and Boulevard Fund." The Board is authorized to disburse such fund, in its judgment, in the maintenance of the parks and boulevards. The fund amounts to about \$85,000 a year at present, and is obviously inadequate. The results obtained with such meagre resources are surprising, and the parks, already very beautiful, are constantly becoming more attractive. This is largely owing to the taste and influence of the late Christian Wahl, a wealthy and cultivated man, with a natural talent for landscape gardening, who was the father of the Milwaukee park system.

Prior to 1891, the city possessed ten inconsiderable squares or parks, ranging from one acre to twenty-nine acres in extent, which were, and are still, managed by the Board of Public Works. Since 1891 the following additional parks have been purchased and improved.

Lake park.....	area	124.0	acres
Riverside park.....	"	24.0	"
Lincoln park.....	"	5.1	"
Washington park.....	"	147.7	"
Sherman park.....	"	23.7	"
Mitchell park.....	"	57.4	"
Kosciuszko park.....	"	36.9	"
Humbolt park.....	"	45.7	"
		<hr/>	
		464.5	"

The Board has improved and developed these parks with great skill and taste, and has also laid out and beautified several broad and extensive boulevards. The Milwaukee parks are, in the main, somewhat remote from the center of the city. Some of them are really on the "outskirts," but are easily accessible to large bodies of the population. It is proposed to connect them by a system of boulevards which will practically girdle the city, extending from Lake Park, which overlooks Lake Michigan from the high bluffs on the north, to Humbolt Park, which is not remote from the Lake Shore at a point about five miles south of Lake Park. The Milwaukee park system reflects credit on the city, and the progress made in the brief space of a dozen years is deserving of commendation.

Washington.—*Park System.*⁷ A greatly increased interest has been manifested in the development of the park system of Washington during the past five years. This interest is more than local. Washington is the National Capital, and the past few years have witnessed a remarkable growth of the sentiment in Congress, on the part of both Representatives and Senators, for the beautification of the city. There is reason to believe that it is now the fixed policy of Congress to make Washington the most beautiful capital city in the world.

When the American Institute of Architects held its convention in Washington in 1900, one of the principal topics of discussion was "the future grouping of Government buildings and the park treatment of Washington City." At this meeting, a committee of the Institute was appointed to bring the matter to the attention of Congress, and Congress authorized the appointment of a commission, which was known as the "Park Commission." This Commission consisted of Messrs. D. H. Burnham, F. L. Olmstead, Charles F. McKim and Augustus St. Gaudens. The Commission spent over a year on the study of the subject, visiting, in this connection, the principal American and European cities. Its report was submitted to the Senate in January, 1902. The report contained a comprehensive plan for the future treatment of the entire park system of the District of Columbia. The development of the plan outlined by this Commission would cost many millions of dollars; but the intentions of the promoters of the plan are that the scheme outlined should be kept in mind, as a guide, in the development of the park system, for all time to come, and that when new Government buildings are needed and enlargements of the park areas are required, this plan should serve as a guide for all future work in this direction. The action of Congress, during the present session, on pending bills for the erection of additional Government buildings, has been in conformity with the plan outlined by the Park Commission.

The total park area of the District of Columbia is approximately 3,350 acres. This area is exclusive of several hundred small park spaces—circles, triangles, etc.—at the intersection of streets and avenues. These spaces add very much to the beauty of the city. These small park spaces vary in size from a few thousand feet up to nearly an acre. They are set with shrubs and flowers, and many of them are furnished with benches.

The park area of 3,350 acres, above referred to, is made up of twenty-five separate park spaces, varying in extent from one acre to sixteen hundred acres. Six of these parks are public squares and circles, covering only about one acre each; eight of them are parks varying in size from twelve to seventy acres; while four are parks of more than one hundred acres each. The principal parks are the Zoological Park, consisting of 170 acres; the Soldiers' Home grounds, 502 acres; Potomac Park, 739 acres; and Rock Creek Park, 1600 acres.

The greatest acquisition to the park system of the District of Columbia is the Rock Creek Park, which was established by Act of Congress, in September, 1890. This is to be the future great park of the National Capital. It lies along both banks of Rock Creek, extending northward from the edge of the city

⁷ Communication of George S. Wilson, Esq., Secretary Board of Charities of the District of Columbia.

to the northwest corner of the District of Columbia, a distance of about five miles. This park is still unimproved, except that several good roads have been built, and these roads are among the most attractive driveways about the city. The Potomac Park, which consists of over 700 acres, has been made, very largely, from land reclaimed along the banks of the Potomac River. There is in contemplation a plan to make another large park area by the reclamation of the flats along the banks of the Anacostia River, known as the "Eastern Branch" of the Potomac. Zoological Park, Soldiers' Home Grounds and Rock Creek Park are all easily accessible by street car. All the other parks are within the limits of the city proper and are readily accessible. Considering the wide streets and the many small parks scattered throughout the city, Washington is undoubtedly better provided with breathing spaces for its people, than any other city in the country, if not in the world.

There is, however, need for public playgrounds, either in the parks or in places especially set apart. Considerable interest in this matter has been manifested and several public playgrounds have been established within the past two years. In the larger parks, there is need that tennis courts, ball grounds, and other facilities for athletics should be provided.

The future plans for the development of the park system contemplate a formal treatment of considerable areas of park space within the city proper. These are the areas where will be located the future public buildings. The plans include, also, park connections between the various park spaces now available, or hereafter to be secured. It is hoped, also, that a series of military forts, surrounding the city of Washington and within the District of Columbia, will be purchased by the Government and set aside for park purposes. These forts are, at present, well outside the city of Washington; but the street extension plan, as well as the plan outlined for the future park development, contemplates a city covering practically the entire District of Columbia. Several city streets have already been extended, and are improved and lighted to the borders of the District. The entire District comprises less than 70 square miles.

The administration of the park system in the District of Columbia, like the administration of almost every other department of the local government, is wholly unique as compared with the administration of the system in other cities. Nearly all of the smaller parks, within the city proper, are under the jurisdiction of an engineer officer of the army, detailed as "the officer in charge of public buildings and grounds." The Capitol grounds are under the jurisdiction of the architect of the Capitol. The Zoological Park is under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The great Rock Creek Park is under the joint control of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia and the Chief of Engineers of the United States Army. There is a great diversity of jurisdiction, therefore, vested partially in the officials of the Federal Government and partially in local officials. The system is centralized only in the fact that Congress has exclusive jurisdiction over all.